

Joint statement: EU industry calls on European leaders to rescue stagnating Single Market and make product legislation more effective



The EU Single Market has thrived on effective product legislation, but that era has come to an end. In recent years, the EU adopted more regulations than any other region¹, yet product law remains ambiguous and fragmented. The signatories seek clear legislation setting meaningful, ambitious, enforceable goals without overriding technical aspects which should be defined in harmonised and timely listed standards.

This uncertainty results in higher costs and less consumer trust, at a time when increasingly more products are being sold online to EU consumers by entities based outside the EU. Enforcement efforts often prioritise procedural requirements instead of evaluating the technical performance and safety of products. All this opens the way for unsafe products, increases administrative burdens for both manufacturers and market surveillance authorities and stalls the rollout of innovative technologies, essential for more sustainable products and economic recovery.

As part of the 2024-2029 strategic agenda, the EU is determined to “strengthen its long-term competitiveness” and achieve a “deeper Single Market”². A key element in attaining this vision is the establishment of a stable and consistent regulatory environment. For European industry to thrive, legislation must be **simple to understand, easy to enforce, and uniformly applied across the Single Market**.

By streamlining processes, the EU can empower businesses to focus on what truly matters: delivering high-quality products and services that meet the needs of all European consumers.

Our recommendations for a Single Market of safe and sustainable products

1.Product legislation must be coherent, simple and clear. When legislation is vague or overly ambiguous, it results in inconsistent application across the European Union. This affects the free movement of goods and generates higher costs for companies whose products are sold in the EU, with a negative impact on consumers. Enhanced alignment across different pieces of legislation would significantly reduce confusion among stakeholders in the value chain and simplify compliance processes for businesses. For legislation to be clear and effective, reference standards and appropriate measurement methodologies must be made available in time.

2.Better and more frequent enforcement is crucial to ensure the competitiveness of the EU manufacturing industry and protect consumers. Inconsistent enforcement across Member States endangers the EU Single Market, causes unfair competition and gives a way for unsafe, non compliant and poorly sustainable products that do not respect the European standards.. Sufficient resources are needed to establish proper market surveillance. When it comes to online imports, for instance, more effective means for verifying product compliance must be introduced to protect consumers and ensure fair competition.

3.National deviations disrupt the Single Market. Often, Member States adopt diverging national legislation. One reason for it is that EU legislation takes too long to develop. This leads to a fragmented legislative landscape, which disrupts the Single Market and increases costs for companies while generating confusion for consumers.

1. Draghi, M. (2024, September 9). The future of European competitiveness

2. European Council. (2024). Strategic agenda 2024-2029. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/european-council/strategic-agenda-2024-2029/>.